

Message Text

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63/21

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SCCT-01 /067 W
----- 062977

P R 290855Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3602

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0830

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - E.O., TAGS AND SUBJECT ADDED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: QUIET WEEKEND, YET HEIGHTENED APPREHENSION

1. WEEKEND OF SEPT. 27-28 PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT

INITIATED BY EITHER EPMG OR FRONT (ELF/PLF), CAPPING WEEK
OF RELATIVE CALM AND QUIET. MESKAL CELEBRATION HELD IN
QUEEN OF SHEBA STADIUM, ATTENDED BY CONSULAR CORPS,
WAS PRESIDED OVER BY VICE ADMINISTRATORS HIDAD AND
TESFALIDAD, WITH NO MAJOR EPMG MILITARY LEADER PRESENT.

CEREMONY WAS BRIEF AND VERY SUBDUED, WITH LESS THAN
2,000 SPECTATORS (OF WHICH FULLY ONE-QUARTER WERE
SECURITY FORCES) IN ATTENDANCE. IT IS OBVIOUS EPMG
WAS DETERMINED TO CONDUCT THIS TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS
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RITE, BUT WITH MINIMUM FANFARE AND MAXIMUM SECURITY.

2. IN THE ABSENCE OF GEN. GETACHEW, WHO WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN IN ADDIS NOW OVER ONE WEEK, SITUATION IN THE ASMARA AREA HAS BEEN INORDINATELY QUIET. ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPT. 28, EPMG PUT TOGETHER AD HOC SHOW OF FORCE ON ASMARA MAIN STREET UTILIZING SIX M-41 TANKS NEWLY ARRIVED FROM MASSAWA WHICH WERE FOLLOWED BY EIGHT APC'S. SIMULTANEOUSLY, SEVERAL T-28 AIRCRAFT AND A HELICOPTER REPEATEDLY FLEW LOW AND NOISILY OVER THE CITY DURING LATE AFTERNOON. PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATION OF STRENGTH IS UNCLEAR, OTHER THAN GENERAL INTIMIDATION OF POPULACE.

3. LOCAL LULL, RATHER THAN EASING ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION, IS TENDING TO HEIGHTEN FEARS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS THAT EITHER EPMG OR FRONT IS REGROUPING FOR RENEWED ACTIVITIES.

SHERRY
UNQUOTE
SHERRY

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